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ABSTRACT

Participants of a colloquium series on creativity and giftedness held at Arizona University were surveyed about concerns and suggestions regarding needs, resources, and appropriate linkages for creativity and giftedness programs. Teachers, parents, administrators, school board members, students, and consultants raised concerns over minimal state funds, regulations specifying the criteria of two standard deviations above the mean, inflexible program design in the schools, inadequate teacher preparation and selection, problems in identification and screening, and the importance of community and home cooperation with the schools. Sample survey forms are included, along with the agenda from the final workshop in the series. (CL)

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ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS, RESOURCES AND LINKAGES

FOR

CREATIVITY AND GIFTEDNESS

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Richard Saltford
Colloquium Series on
Creativity and Giftedness
Special Education 595bx
Spring, 1981

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INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes assessments of needs, resources and appropriate linkages for creativity and giftedness programs, as administered during four public sessions of the College of Education's Colloquium Series on Creativity and Giftedness held during the Spring semester, 1981. The assessments were conducted to assure that the Series would be as responsive as possible and practical to perceptions and suggestions of the various constituencies represented as participants.

The concepts of creativity and giftedness are plagued by strong emotions, ranging from arguments for elitism, to the sometimes dire consequences of being identified as 'different.' Labeling a thing, or person, allows 'us' to respect or disrespect, accept or reject, foster or discourage, etc., etc. A label allows for sides to be taken on issues which often beg the question. Basic to the issue of creative and gifted education is, perhaps, the question of what could or should we expect or demand of the educational process for our children? And, where does, or should, responsibility lie for assuring that this process is, or will be, in the best interest of each and all persons as part of a responsible and progressive society?

Creativity and giftedness are inherent qualities in all individuals, to some degree. It is impossible to predict when, under what circumstances, and with what dimensions these qualities will surface. A stifled educational process, from any quarter, can cause one's potential to never materialize to the fullest. Although many factors and circumstances can influence the creative and gifted potentials, teachers are, and likely will remain, the primary inspiration. Their motivation, commitment and training are pivotal factors in the development of effective programs and environments for learning.

The future of our very being may depend on exploitation of creativity and giftedness to the greatest extent. It is in the spirit of this bias that this summary is offered.

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTATION AND PROCEDURES

The assessments included provisions for both specific and broad concerns and suggestions regarding needs, resources and appropriate linkages for creativity and giftedness programs. Each respondent was asked to address the issues from his/her personal or professional perspective, e.g. parent, teacher, counselor, school administrator, school board member, community service provider, etc. The instrument was designed to identify problem areas, possible solutions, and factors which might promote or inhibit solutions. Assessment forms were available at each of the four public sessions of the Series, and participants were encouraged to complete and return the forms as being contributory to planning for this Series as well as future efforts.

The final public session, "Where Do We Go From Here?", was specifically organized on the basis of assessments received from earlier sessions. All participants in this session were required to address the issues raised by the earlier assessments through special interest discussion sessions. Responses from teachers accounted for 50% of the returned assessments, with parents (25%), and administrators, school board members, students and consultants (25%) making up the rest.

SUMMARY OF NEEDS

General comments regarding needs suggest that the recent State mandate for gifted education may inhibit rather than foster programs, given the single participation criterion of two standard deviations above the norm on an approved, academic-oriented, test. This regulation will likely exclude many truly gifted students from enrichment programs; and certainly does not respect creativity as being inherent in all individuals.

The provision of minimal funds from the State cannot begin to do justice to the needs of even those meeting the criterion (top two percent); however the limited funding may provide the impetus for identifying and mobilizing other community resources, which could spur the development of comprehensive programming aimed at a broader spectrum.

Thirty percent of the respondents see the school setting as needing a greater emphasis on creativity and giftedness, with the home (20%), family counseling (20%), youth clubs (10%), juvenile justice (10%), and assorted community organizations (10%) following in importance. Those favoring integrated programs out-numbered those prefering special 'pull out' programs 2:1.

A positive public attitude and expectation regarding creativity and giftedness, involving the schools, community and home, must be developed in order to identify and nurture these characteristics to everyone's potential.

Perceived needs generally fall into four categories:

Designing Programs in the Schools-
- Pre-school through grade 2
- Grades 3 - 6
- Grades 7 - 8
- Grades 9 - 12

Teacher Preparation and Selection
Identification and Screening of Creativity and Giftedness
Developing Programs Beyond the Schools

Specific concerns are as follows:

1. Designing Programs in the Schools

Respondents feel that creativity and giftedness programs should be provided in a 'life-long' learning context; from pre-school through post-college continuing education programs. The earlier one is exposed to creativity programming, the more creative one is likely to become. Participation in programs should be available according to one's development and interests, with flexible timing and curricula designed for traditional as well as enrichment educational experiences.

Creativity and giftedness should be recognized and respected as worthwhile achievements, with appropriate displays and demonstrations of one's abilities. Exemplary programs should be encouraged, rewarded and widely disseminated for replication. Creative teachers should be rewarded, while non-creative teachers should be asked to leave the profession.

The entire community should serve as the learning environment, with field trips, mentors, individual studies, and other forms of involvement being the norm rather than the exception, in order to 'turn kids on' to the learning process for the rest of their lives.

Considerable support of creativity and giftedness programs is needed in the classroom, including: basic philosophical support from all parents, administrators, and fellow educators; access to and time to develop creative educational materials; released time and/or funding for in-service education relating to subject matters and creativity and giftedness educational processes; leadership from school board members, superintendents and other administrators; legislative awareness, direction and funding for educational programming which is student-centered; removal of misconceptions regarding creativity and giftedness between adults and children, and children and children; 'free' exchange of ideas among educators for the good of the children; and, suitable and effective evaluation techniques.

These enhancements in the school setting can only occur if "average as the American dream" is replaced with a commitment and drive for excellence.

2. Teacher Preparation and Selection

Respondents feel that creativity should be a characteristic of all teachers and administrators in the educational system. Too often, prospective teachers get 'locked into' the profession before they have the opportunity to actually experience the rigors and expectations of teaching. Exposure to effective, creative teaching should occur very early in the teacher preparation process. Probations or teaching internships should be established whereby experience could be gained from 'master' teachers. Parents and students should have a say in teacher promotion and retention.

Teachers must have both broad-based and specific subject matter expertise; as well as a willingness and ability to create learning situations wherein they might learn from the perspectives of others. Teachers should encourage and welcome suggestions from peers, parents and administrators in order to enhance their ability to foster creativity and giftedness. Preparation for creativity and giftedness education should extend to all teachers, counselors and administrators in training; not just those specializing.

Particular efforts should be made to acquaint school board members with the ramifications of creativity and giftedness with respect to educational programs, budgetary and philosophical supports, and effective teaching characteristics.

University programs and professors should exemplify creative learning and teaching.

3. Identification and Screening for Creativity and Giftedness

Perhaps the greatest problem with identification and screening is the lack of a definition of creativity and giftedness which can be held in common among all concerned. The 'elitists' may insist on criteria which set apart for special programming only a small percentage of our children. Others may call for criteria which reflect much broader considerations and respect.

Rather than a forced polarization, were it recognized that everyone has creative potential, and that the real crime is when that potential cannot be realized by virtue of bickering over identification and selection criteria! If and when society develops a commitment to maximizing everyone's potential through the educational process, it will follow that the need for a definition of creativity and giftedness will be lost in the drive for excellence.

Identification and screening should extend beyond strictly academic concerns, in recognition of the many other talents which one may develop creatively. Nominations by one's peers, parents, friends, one's self and the products of one's efforts should be considered along with the more objective tests and methods. Given the opportunity to participate in an enrichment experience, the self-selection process will usually determine if the timing is appropriate, or the level of activity is within reach. If not this time, perhaps another time. If not this activity, perhaps another. Better to come to one's own conclusion, then being denied by some stifling influence.

4. Developing Programs Beyond the Schools

In spite of the considerable room to enhance creativity and giftedness programs in the schools, the schools cannot and should not be expected to carry the burden alone. The schools are but one leg of a 'three legged stool' also involving the community and home. Countless community agencies and organizations should be part of 'networks' for creativity and giftedness learning experiences. These groups, together with community sites, could offer facilities for educational programs to complement, augment, or be integrated with the schools' programs.

Parent advocacy and support groups should take responsibility for fostering creativity and giftedness programs in the home; as well as providing crucial communication links with school and community programs.

RESOURCES AND LINKAGES

Countless resources exist for creativity and giftedness programs within the schools, community and home. There is no end to the realm of possibilities to develop and mobilize resources, and establish appropriate linkages among resources and between resources and needs once a commitment is made to move forward, creatively.

FUTURE PROGRAMS

Respondents were nearly unanimous in their support of future programming efforts following the Colloquium Series. Twelve persons cited Master's degree expectation, while four hope to pursue Doctorate studies in creativity and giftedness. All respondents hope for additional specialized course work and/or workshops, with a great variety of themes, including; 'selling' gifted programs, specific subject matter development (e.g. history, literature, science, math, the future, ethics, the arts, etc.), counseling, alternative programs, enrichment of the basics, research techniques, parent advocacy, "revolving door" in depth, reading, identification, definitions, psychological needs, funding through grants, 'make and take' practical ideas, etc.

COLLOQUIUM SERIES ON CREATIVITY AND GIFTEDNESS

ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS, RESOURCES AND LINKAGES

Dear Participant:

One of the objectives of this Series is to identify and inventory needs, resources and linkages for creativity and gifted programs. These assessments, to be administered at the first three sessions of the Series, will provide a basis for discussion as to future directions for program development at the session on April 4th. We hope that you will complete this assessment, and return it at the end of today's session, or by mail to: R. Saltford, Division of Continuing Education, 1717 E. Speedway, Tucson, 85719.

GENERAL INFORMATION

I am responding to this Assessment as a:

_____Parent
_____Teacher
_____Counselor
_____Other:

_____School Administrator
_____School Board Member
_____Community Service Provider

I hope to gain from this Series:

NEEDS

From my perspective, as noted above, my greatest concern about creativity and gifted program opportunities is:

I feel that the cause of this concern is:

Solutions to this situation might include:

Factors which might inhibit possible solutions could include:

Objectives of creativity and gifted programs should include:

I feel that a greater emphasis should be made on creativity and gifted programs in:

_____Schools _____Youth Clubs _____Family Counseling
_____Juvenile Justice _____The home
_____Other:

This emphasis should be provided through:

_____Special programs outside of regular activities
_____Integrated programs as part of regular activities
_____Other:

Screening for creativity and gifted program participants should be based on:

_____Standardized tests for intelligence
_____Creative or productive performance
_____Nomination of parents, counselors, etc.
_____Other:

With respect to school programs, I feel that more emphasis should be made on creativity and giftedness in:

_____Pre-School _____Elementary School
_____Junior High School _____Senior High School
_____College/University _____Continuing Education

I believe that schools should have personnel with special preparation for working with gifted students: _____YES _____NO

School personnel trained in giftedness should include:

_____Counselors _____Administrators
_____New classroom teachers _____Veteran classroom teachers
_____Support staff, including:

I feel that community agencies should provide more creativity and gifted programs or activities: _____YES _____NO

Those community agencies with the greatest potential impact might include:

From my own perspective, I would like to have:

_____Additional specialized course work in creativity and giftedness.
_____Advanced degree training at the (_____Master's, _____Doctoral) level.
_____Technical assistance in developing creativity and gifted programs.
_____Materials for use in creativity and gifted programs.
_____Workshops directed toward creativity and gifted activities. I would prefer to participate for (_____academic credit, _____CEU credit , ____no credit).

Specific topics for courses, workshops, materials, etc. should include:

RESOURCES

_____I would like to know more about resources available for creativity and gifted programs/activities in:

_____Schools _____Community _____The home
_____Other:

_____I represent a resource for creativity and gifted programs/activities, and would be willing to share my experience. Specifically, I can offer:

As a resource, I can be contacted at:

Name_____ _____

Address___ ___ _____

_____

Phone_____

Best time to call:_____

I recommend the following people or places as offering creative learning experiences:

LINKAGES

I would like to see linkages or alliances developed between or among:

I would be interested in helping form community linkages for creativity and gifted programs/activities through participation in:

_____Planning groups of parents
_____Planning groups of teachers
_____Planning groups of administrators
_____Planning groups of school board members
_____Planning groups of counselors
_____Planning groups of community service representatives
_____Mixed discussion groups
_____Other:

Other comments and suggestions I would like to make:

_____I would like to be on a mailing list for future workshops, programs, etc.

My name _____

Address _____

_____

Phone _____

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

COLLOQUIUM SERIES ON CREATIVITY AND GIFTEDNESS

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

- April 4, 1981 -

Sabbar Shrine Temple, 450 S. Tucson Boulevard

8:00 Registration

8:30 OVERVIEW - William Healey (UA College of Education)

8:45 ARIZONA'S MANDATE FOR GIFTED EDUCATION - Tom Reno (AZ Department of Education)
What the mandate says...programs and resources...
What the mandate doesn't say...

THE MANDATE IN PRACTICE - POINTS OF VIEW
Coordinator of Gifted Programs - Eleanor TeSelle (Mesa School District)
School Board Member - Eva Bacal (Tucson Unified School District)
School Administrator - Don Scott (Amphitheater School District)
Regular Teacher - Jane Raimondi (Tanque Verde School District)
Specialized Teacher - Sharon Hooker (Sunnyside School District)
Parent -

10:00 REACTION TO POINTS OF VIEW

10:30 Break

10:45 until 2:00 WHAT IS STILL MISSING? HOW TO BEGIN?
Problems, solutions and Strategies...(special interest sessions)
(buffet luncheon 12:00 - 1:00)

1. Designing Programs in the Schools - Willard Abraham (ASU)
   Needs and Resources...Bringing them together...
   a) Preschool-grade 2 - Willard Abraham, Cathy Cohn (ASU)
   b) Grades 3-6 - Warren Forsythe (Phoenix District #1)
   c) Grades 7-8 - Sanford Cohn (ASU)
   d) Grades 9-12 - Mari Helen High (Tucson Unified School District)
2. Teacher Preparation and Selection - Eleanor TeSelle
   Skills to develop and look for in creative teachers...
3. Screening and Identification - Robert Hall (Tempe), Gaeel Beaham (UA)
4. Beyond the Schools - Community Resources and Networks
   Enhancing support bases for nurturing creativity...
   Ted Kraver (GAIN), Bobbie Kraver (Washington District), et al

2:00 SUMMARIES OF SPECIAL INTEREST SESSIONS and PLANS FOR THE FUTURE
William Healey, et al

Note: A Browser's Fair of resources and materials for creativity and gifted programs and activities will be held throughout the afternoon.

This session will be of particular interest to parents, educators and others concerned with maximizing the creative potential of all children. Please call 626-5557 if you have any questions.

Please register me for the April 4th session on Creativity and Giftedness:

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Phone _____

___Enclosed is my check for $10 which covers registration and lunch. (Payable to University of Arizona)

___I'll pay on April 4th.

Return to: Division of Continuing Education, 1717 E. Speedway, Tucson, AZ 85719

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